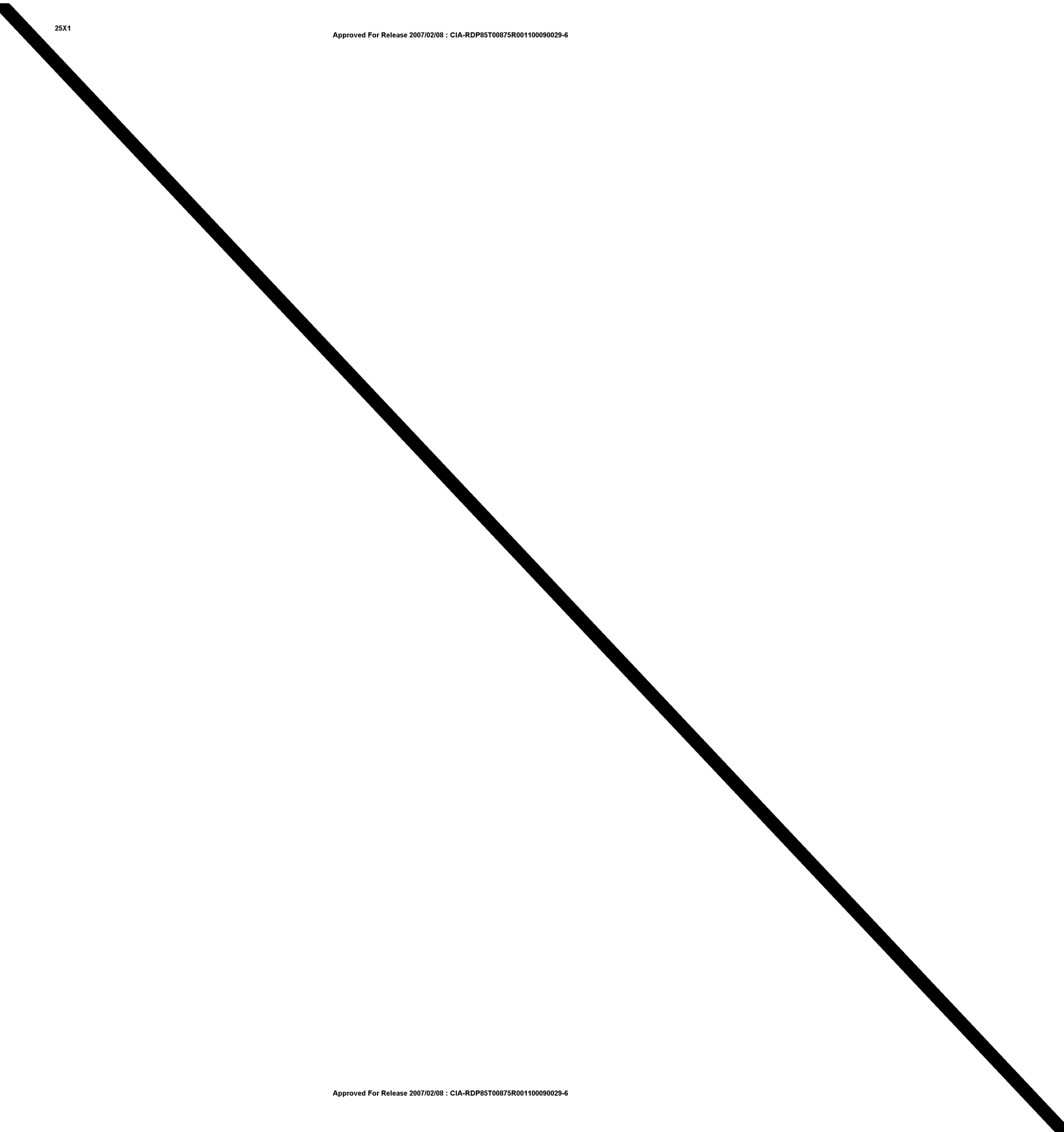
25X1

Approved For Release 2007/02/08 : CIA-RDP85T00875R001100090029-6



Approved For Release 2007/02/08 : CIA-RDP85T00875R001100090029-6

CIA/OCI/IM-0516/70

Approved For Release 2007/02/08 : CIA-RDP85T00875R001100090029-6

Secret

25X1

DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence Memorandum

MOSCOW AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN INDOCHINA

State Dept. review completed

Secret
7

12 June 1970
No. 0516/70

Approved For Release 2007/02/08 : CIA-RDP85T00875R001100090029-6

Approved For Release 2007/02/08 : CIA-RDP85T00875R001100090029-6

WARNING

This document contains information affecting the national defense of the United States, within the meaning of Title 18, sections 793 and 794, of the US Code, as amended. Its transmission or revelation of its contents to or receipt by an unauthorized person is prohibited by law.

GROUP 1
EXCLUDED FROM AUTOMATIC
DOWNGRADING AND
DECLASSIFICATION

Approved For Release 2007/02/08 : CIA-RDP85T00875R001100090029-6

SECRET
Approved For Release 2007/02/08 : CIA-RDP85T00875R001100090029-6
25X1

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
12 June 1970

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Moscow and Recent Developments in Indochina

Summary

The Soviet Union's position in Indochina has deteriorated badly over the past several weeks while that of China has gained correspondingly. The political turnabout in Phnom Penh has delivered Sihanouk into Peking's hands, and the spread of the war into Cambodia has pushed the North Vietnamese toward China. Moscow has responded to these developments at times with apparent confusion, and it is still sorting things out. The Soviets are not likely to accept their predicament lightly and can be expected to make efforts to retrieve the losses they have incurred. At the moment, however, Moscow seems to be hoping that events will eventually move in its favor and to believe that the best way to get back into the act will be via the diplomatic route.

Note: This memorandum was produced solely by CIA. It was prepared by the Office of Current Intelligence and coordinated with the Office of National Estimates.

25X1
SECRET
Approved For Release 2007/02/08 : CIA-RDP85T00875R001100090029-6

Approved For Release 2007/02/08 : CIA-RDP85T00875R001100090029-6

Moscow and Cambodia

1. Peking's sponsorship of Prince Sihanouk has forced Moscow to conduct its continuing battle with the Chinese at the expense of some political support for Hanoi. As a result, Moscow for the first time in recent years has deliberately chosen to remain out of step with Hanoi on a major issue. After a period of hesitancy, Moscow has decided to retain its ties with Phnom Penh while keeping coolly aloof from Sihanouk. This has been made plain by a number of Soviet officials, and is indicated by the minimal references to Sihanouk and his "government" in the Soviet media, diffident treatment of his "ambassador," and Sihanouk's own remarks indirectly critical of Moscow. The Soviets undoubtedly consider the colorful Sihanouk an unreliable character and have made caustic comments in private about his ability to regain power. The principal reason for their failure to embrace him, however, has almost certainly been his sponsorship by Peking. Several Soviet diplomats have bluntly said that as long as the prince remains a "tool" of the Chinese, he will not get Soviet recognition.

2. Although Moscow has attempted to salvage what it could of its position in Phnom Penh, events there have gone counter to Soviet interests. Under Sihanouk the Soviets built up a major listening post in Southeast Asia and Moscow's support for his particular brand of neutrality allowed them to exert some influence. The Soviet leaders initially appeared hopeful that they could retain this position under Lon Nol, but Cambodia's rapid turn toward the US, South Vietnam, and Thailand has brought these hopes into serious question. Though Moscow has mildly rebuked the new government for these warming ties by recalling its ambassador, it evidently intends to keep its mission in Phnom Penh as long as this can be done without grossly offending Hanoi. Moscow's assessment of the political stamina of the Lon Nol government may partly figure in these moves. But it is more likely that the Soviet posture reflects nothing more than vague hopes for a favorable turn in the situation, perhaps toward a negotiated settlement.

Approved For Release 2007/02/08 : CIA-RDP85T00875R001100090029-6

Approved For Release 2007/02/08 : CIA-RDP85T00875R001100090029-6
SECRET
25X1

Strains With Hanoi

3. Moscow's maneuvering over Cambodia has served as a surface indicator of deeper differences with Hanoi over the course of the war. The Soviets seem to be displaying growing concern that Hanoi's program of protracted and expanded warfare throughout Indochina is causing North Vietnam to overextend itself. Moscow might be apprehensive that this could result in increased demands for certain kinds of political support it would be reluctant to give, and would in any event not prevent a further enhancement of Peking's position. These concerns probably led to debate during Le Duan's extended visit to the USSR in late April and early May. Although the exact purpose of his stay remains obscure, Le Duan apparently sought a strengthened Soviet political, economic, and military commitment, but most probably did not get all he wanted or thought he needed. The Soviets probably stressed to Le Duan the risk of a wider war, including the possibility of US counteraction, and advised him to leave the door open to a negotiated settlement.

4. Moscow's apprehensions over Hanoi's staying power in particular and the impact of the widened war on Soviet interests in general have been reflected since last month in a series of unusual private statements by Soviet officials. These men maintain that North Vietnam is greatly strained by the conflict and as a consequence has suffered a temporary military setback. Soviet sources have on at least two occasions reportedly gone so far as to say North Vietnam is "exhausted." The timing and context of the statements suggest that they were probably designed to fan US apprehension over increased Chinese influence in the area, possibly with the hope of encouraging the US to be militarily firm in the short term, yet flexible in negotiating once the Cambodian situation has been stabilized. The statements taken together also evidence a more tempered Soviet estimate of Hanoi's prospects.

5. Soviet concern over Peking's expanded influence in Indochina has been reflected in recent

SECRET
25X1
Approved For Release 2007/02/08 : CIA-RDP85T00875R001100090029-6

Approved For Release 2007/02/08 : CIA-RDP85T00875R001100090029-6

public pronouncements reiterating past warnings of Chinese duplicity and cautioning against over-reliance on Peking. These statements have probably been paralleled by similar private demarches to Hanoi that China is pursuing a course that entails little risk or cost to itself. The most explicit of these warnings appeared in the 4 June New Times. The article, rumored to have been authored by a leading Soviet diplomatic specialist on Southeast Asia, Mikhail Kapitsa, reviewed Peking's efforts to extend its domination in Asia and warned that China is forcing others to adopt "adventurist tactics" to fulfill its own hegemonist ambitions. That the Soviets think some people in Hanoi are receptive to this argument seems to be indicated in the article's statement that Peking's domineering methods are "arousing concern even among those who sincerely want to cooperate with China."

6. Although differences over military tactics, Chinese influence, the Sihanouk government, and negotiating prospects have probably brought strains to the Soviet-Hanoi relationship, it seems unlikely that either side will allow these to get out of hand. One indicator of this is signs that both the USSR and Hanoi still think each other's positions have not hardened and remain susceptible to influence. The Soviets realize that Hanoi remains their most significant point of contact in Southeast Asia and--despite Hanoi's improved ties with China--are still counting on North Vietnam to counter Peking's influence there over the long run. The Soviets apparently calculate that as long as they provide substantial political, economic, and military support--even though it may not be all Hanoi wants--they will be able to maintain considerable influence in Hanoi.

7. Moscow probably hopes that, though the Soviet position is undergoing short term erosion, Hanoi will eventually see the advantages of negotiations--conditions under which Soviet influence could be maximized. The Soviets may think that, under the pressure of arduous fighting and the prospect of increased dependence on Peking, Hanoi

Approved For Release 2007/02/08 : CIA-RDP85T00875R001100090029-6

Approved For Release 2007/02/08 : CIA-RDP85T00875R001100090029-6

25X1

will be more receptive to Moscow's views. [redacted] 25X1
1 [redacted] comments by some Soviet officials [redacted] 25X1
[redacted] have indicated that Moscow thinks a tactical US success in Cambodia could produce such a
25X1 reconsideration on Hanoi's part.

Moscow's Interest in a Political Settlement

8. Moscow's interest in reasserting its position in Indochina by some sort of political or diplomatic means has been evident for the past two months. The USSR gave positive play to the French proposal for an international conference following the Cambodian coup, and Malik, Soviet ambassador to the UN, in mid-April hinted his country's support for it. Since the beginning of US military activity in Cambodia, however, Moscow has ruled out a conference "at this time" and has held out no prospect of getting Hanoi to attend. Nevertheless, the Soviets have clearly left open the possibility of a conference on Indochina some time in the future. A ranking Soviet specialist on Asian affairs said last month, for example, that negotiations on a Laotian-type coalition arrangement for Cambodia might be possible "later." Other hints of the Soviet attitude have been contained in items like a recent Izvestia piece that approvingly noted French Foreign Minister Schumann's remark that a military solution is impossible and that the only conceivable settlement is contained "in the logic of the Geneva accords."

9. The planned visit of Deputy Foreign Minister Firyubin to the UN suggests an effort to enhance prospects for a political settlement. Firyubin may want to take soundings as to the possibility of international action to restore Cambodian "neutrality" after 30 June and may attempt to anticipate the demarches U Thant will make on the subject when he visits Moscow later this month. Meanwhile, some recent press comments which criticized the Djakarta conference as US-dominated, while playing up the theme of Asian opposition to Peking, have suggested the Soviets may be toying with the idea of stimulating their

[redacted] 25X1

Approved For Release 2007/02/08 : CIA-RDP85T00875R001100090029-6

Approved For Release 2007/02/08 : CIA-RDP85T00875R001100090029-6

25X1

own "nonaligned" initiative through such seconds as the Indians.

10. Despite evident Soviet interest in picking up the negotiating ball, Moscow seems to realize it cannot go much further in its independent actions than it already has without producing a sharp rebuke from Hanoi. As it is, Moscow is probably anticipating another thunderous polemical blast from Peking charging it with "sham support but real betrayal" of the North Vietnamese. Moscow's self-proclaimed position as the firm ally of the "national liberation movements" and its concern to avoid pushing Hanoi too far too fast seem likely to constrain the Soviets from issuing their own calls for negotiations. The Soviets are more likely to try to foster international interest in a political settlement, hold down their losses as much as possible, and hope that events can somehow be manipulated to their advantage.

25X1

Approved For Release 2007/02/08 : CIA-RDP85T00875R001100090029-6